

Television Interview Tips

Non-Verbal

- Smile when appropriate
- Be animated as appropriate
- Feel free to gesture, but don't block the camera
- Maintain eye contact with the reporter (or camera)
- Don't watch yourself on a monitor - it's distracting
- Avoid licking your lips, squinting, rolling your eyes and excessive blinking

Verbal

- Communicate to the person in the living room
- Communicate with energy
- Be polite
- Keep sentences brief - think sound "bites"
- Avoid "uh," "um" and "ok"
- Avoid jargon and acronyms
- Speak distinctly in your normal volume and be sure to vary pitch and pace

Posture

- Sit up straight
- Sit on your jacket
- Don't lean or swivel
- Keep your feet flat on the ground or cross your legs toward the interviewer
- Don't put your arm on the armrest
- Don't tilt your head to one side - it communicates uncertainty

Appearance

- | | |
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| • Avoid 3-piece suits | Avoid large shiny jewelry |
| • Don't wear black | Wear solid colors |
| • Avoid extreme patterns | Take off the glasses if you can |
| • Avoid intricate patterns or contrasting colors | Keep hair out of your eyes and face |
| • Wear tie with strong color | Be clean shaven unless bearded |
| • Wear a jacket/long sleeves | Wear pale blue or striped shirt |

The Environment

- Review notes and talking points before coming to location of interview
- Have water on hand
- Make sure the backdrop is suitable (or suits you if it's in their studio)
- Be prepared for them to want background shots of you in your work environment

Remotes (With an Earpiece)

- Don't touch the earpiece unless it falls out; test audio levels before starting
- Always ask the producer where you should keep your eyes
- Ask the reporter to tell you when you're "off the air"

Radio Speaking Tips

- Remember reporters typically want short sound bites
- Describe the topic so the "listener" can envision it
- Speak slowly and enunciate clearly
- Connect with the listener in their car or home
- Always assume you are being recorded
- Don't let silence intimidate you - feel free to pause
- Avoid "uh"s and "um"s
- Have your talking points nearby - since you're not on camera you can refer to them throughout the interview
- To highlight a point say: "This is really important..."

The Environment

- Avoid background noise when doing a radio interview in person or via telephone
- Sit up straight or even stand up (it energizes your speech)
- Behave as if you were on camera - it will help you stay animated and energetic

Television and Radio Appearances With Other Guests

- Don't let other guests hijack the agenda
- Disagree firmly but politely
- Don't get into a heated discussion on the air - remember the listener
- Speak directly to the other guests rather than through the host
- Affirm positive questions: "I'm glad you asked that..." or "That's a good question..."

Print Interview Tips

Print interviews offer opportunities for more details and depth

- Find a suitable location to talk to the reporter (either in person or via telephone) without interruptions
- Never take the call cold - arrange a time for you or the reporter to call back to get your thoughts and facts together
- Make sure you have your messages/talking points handy
- If it's a phone interview don't use the speaker phone - it sounds like you're in a tunnel
- Stand up to talk on the phone
- Explain complex information in simple language; think quotable quotes
- Be sure to ask if they understood your answer or would like you to clarify
- Listen carefully to the question
- In a face-to-face interview, don't let your guard down
- Print reporters need quotes much like television reporters need sound bites
- Make your message quotable
- Keep the reader in mind instead of focusing on the reporter - the reporter may know more than the reader
- Assess the appropriate level of the reporter and publication and talk to that level (for example, you can be more technical with Science Magazine than Reader's Digest)